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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ADS-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 IO-14 /105 W
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R 172032Z MAY 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 721
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USUN NEW YORK 953
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINSO QUARRY HTS CZ
AMEMBASSY LONDON

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3993

E.O. 12065: XDS-4 5/17/09 (CHAPLIN, MAXWELL) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - MAY 17, 1979

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3756

() SUMMARY: MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS EVENTS OF THE WEEK WERE UNCONFIRMED LATE REPORTS OF "DISAPPEAREDS" BROUGHT TO BUENOS AIRES AND THE REPORTED REAPPEARANCE IN JAIL OF SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER LILIANA AMAYA AFTER TEN DAYS DETENTION INCOMMUNICADO. THE RECENT PHONE AND LETTER COMMUNICATIONS FROM MISSING PERSONS ROBERT AND MARIA BARREIRO AND THELMA JARA DE CABEZAS WERE REPORTED IN SEPTELS. ALSO, DURING THE WEEK FOREIGN MINISTER PASTRO SPOKE OF THE IACHR VISIT, ARGENTINA'S ELECTION TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE WAS WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS. A FEDERAL COURT RULED THAT FORMER PRESIDENT CAMPORA CAN SUE FOR

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HIS PENSION AND PLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE UNIVERSITIES ARE LIKELY TO BE BANNED BY A NEW UNIVERSITIES LAW.

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MRS. TIMERMAN REPORTED ON HER HUSBAND'S CONDITION. GOA IS PREPARING A "WHITE PAPER" OR POSSIBLY A SERIES OF STATEMENTS ON ITS VERSION OF THE REPRESSION OF SUBVERSIVES. WE HAVE REPORTS OF A POSSIBLE VISIT BY US JEWISH AUTHOR ELLIE WIESEL. END SUMMARY.

1. (U) FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR ON THE IACHR VISIT ---- IN A MAY 13 PRESS INTERVIEW, ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR DECLARED THAT THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT WOULD NOT CHANGE IN ANY WAY THE TERMS OF THE ORIGINAL ARGENTINE INVITATION. THE POSTPONEMENT WAS WHOLLY DUE TO INTERNAL OAS PROBLEMS, HE SAID. PASTOR SAID THAT GOA "KNOWS THE COMMISSION WILL HEAR VOICES CRITICAL OF OUR GOVERNMENT, BUT IT WILL ALSO HEAR OURS. WE ARE SURE OF OUR POSITION--THAT WE DID NOT INITIATE THE NOW-DEFEATED SUBVERSIVE WAR AND THAT OUR OBJECTIVE IS SINGULAR AND CLEAR, THE FULL RESTORATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES." PASTOR ADDED THAT THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW THAT ARGENTINES ARE THE FIRST INTERESTED IN ENDING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS AND THAT AN HONEST APPRAISAL WILL CONFIRM THAT GREAT STRIDES HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE.

2. (U) ARGENTINA ELECTED TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS BODY-- THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED MAY 12 THAT ARGENTINA WAS UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE NEWLY EXPANDED HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF THE UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL. THE COMMUNIQUE ADDED THAT ARGENTINE MARIO AMADEO "HAS JOINED" THE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES. THE RELEASE STATED THAT "ARGENTINA'S PRESENCE IN THESE

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INTERNATIONAL FORUMS IMPLIES A SERIES OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNTRY'S INTEREST IN THIS FIELD."

3. (U) COURT PERMITS CAMPORA TO SUE--- A FEDERAL COURT HAS OPENED THE WAY FOR FORMER PRESIDENT HECTOR CAMPORA TO CLAIM HIS PRESIDENTIAL PENSION. CAMPORA'S PENSION HAD BEEN BLOCKED BY THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE BECAUSE OF HIS INCLUSION UNDER THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT. THE COURT RULED THAT CAMPORA COULD SUE FOR HIS PENSION, REJECTING THE MINISTRY'S ARGUMENTS THAT CAMPORA'S ASSETS WERE FROZEN UNDER THE ACT AND

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THAT CAMPORA COULD NOT SUE BECAUSE HE DID NOT RESIDE IN ARGENTINA, BUT IN THE EXTRATERRITORIAL CONFINES OF THE MEXICAN EMBASSY. THE MINISTRY WILL APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE SUPREME COURT.

4. (U) ABEL MEDINA'S ASSETS CONFISCATED BY STATE-- PERONIST LEADER ABEL MEDINA, WHO HAS SHARED ASYLUM WITH HECTOR CAMPORA IN THE MEXICAN EMBASSY SINCE 1976, WAS STRIPPED OF ALL HIS ASSETS BY DECISION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON PATRIMONIAL RESPONSIBILITY. THE COMMISSION SAID MEDINA HAD NOT SHOWN PROOF OF MEDINA'S LEGAL ACQUISITION OF HIS GOOD, WHICH WERE EMBARGOED WHEN HE WAS PLACED UNDER THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT IN 1976.

5. (U) POLITICS WILL BE BANNED AT UNIVERSITIES--- ARGENTINE EDUCATION MINISTER LLERENA AMADEO SAID MAY 10 THAT THE NEW UNIVERSITY LAW WILL BAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY FROM NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES AND WILL PROHIBIT UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS FROM HOLDING POSTS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES. THE MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT THE POLITICAL BAN WAS ESSENTIAL SINCE UNIVERSITIES ARE SOUNDING BOARDS AND IF THEY BECOME POLITICAL ONES, IT CREATES A STRUGGLE WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR FUNCTION."

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NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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6. [REDACTED] JACOBO TIMERMAN UPDATE----

MRS. JACOBO TIMERMAN TOLD EMBOFF MAY 16 THAT SHE HAS RETURNED TO BUENOS AIRES FROM ISRAEL TO BE WITH HER HUSBAND, THEIR HOPES HAVING FADED THAT HE WOULD SHORTLY BE RELEASED TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. SHE SAID THEIR LAWYER HAD APPEALED TO A CIVIL COURT THE RECENT DECISION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON PATRIMONIAL RECOVERY CONFISCATING TIMERMAN'S SHARES IN LA OPINION, A PRINTING PLANT AND A SMALL APARTMENT. TIMERMAN, SHE SAID, IS WELL BUT REMAINS DEPRESSED. HE RECEIVES HIS RABBI, BROTHER AND A RELATIVE PHYSICIAN REGULARLY, CAN HAVE ANY LOCAL READING MATERIAL AND RECEIVES ALL HIS MAIL UNTOUCHED EXCEPT THAT WHICH COMES IN ENGLISH, ACCORDING TO MRS. TIMERMAN. HE CAN SPEAK TO HIS CHILDREN AND RELATIVES BY PHONE. TIMERMAN WAS ESCORTED TO AN EYE CLINIC WHERE HIS EYE CONDITION WAS SUCCESSFULLY TREATED AND HE IS NOT DENIED ACCESS TO DENTISTS OR OTHER

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SPECIALISTS. MRS. TIMERMAN DENIED RUMORS THAT HER HUSBAND WAS GOING ON A HUNGER STRIKE TO PROTEST HIS SITUATION. SHE SAID HE DISTRACTS HIMSELF BY WORKING INTERMITTENTLY ON A DETECTIVE STORY. MRS. TIMERMAN SAID NEITHER SHE NOR HER HUSBAND ENTERTAIN FALSE HOPES ABOUT AN EARLY RELEASE. SHE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR AMBASSADOR CASTRO'S VISIT TO HER HUSBAND AND THE CONTINUING INTEREST SHOWN BY CONGRESSMEN CONTE AND GILMAN.

7. (U) MINOR SENTENCED FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES----

A MINOR WHOSE NAME WAS WITH HELD BECAUSE OF HIS AGE WAS SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS OF PRISON IN SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO PROVINCE FOR RECRUITING SECONDARY STUDENTS INTO THE ERP AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES.

8. GOA MAY REVEAL DETAILS OF ANTI-SUBVERSIVE FIGHT----

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ROBERTO GARCIA OF LA OPINION PREDICTED IN THE MAY 16 EDITION THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY SOON BEGIN TO DISSEMINATE DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS REVEALING GREATER DETAILS OF THE ANTI-SUBVERSION FIGHT. THESE WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED REPORTS WOULD PUT THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OFFENSIVE IN EXPLAINING THE SUBVERSIVE PROBLEM INSTEAD OF PASSIVELY DEFENDING ITSELF FROM ACCUSATIONS ORIGINATING ABROAD. GARCIA SPECULATED THAT THE PROJECT HAD THE APPROVAL AND COLLABORATION OF THE THREE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS THE PRESIDENCY AND SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND WOULD HELP DEMONSTRATE BOTH THE COST AND RESULT OF THE DEFEAT OF SUBVERSION IN THE COUNTRY.

9. (U) HERALD CRITICIZES US RESPONSE TO CHILE---
THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD SOUNDLY CRITICIZED THE USG RESPONSE TO CHILE'S REFUSAL TO EXTRADITE THREE OFFICIALS ACCUSED IN THE LETELIER MURDER CASE. CLAIMING THAT THE
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CIA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR FAR WORSE CRIMES IN THE PURSUIT OF US OBJECTIVES, THE HERALD EDITORIAL DEPLORED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S "PERSISTENCE IN TREATING SOVEREIGN STATES TO THE SOUTH AS JUVENILE DELINQUENTS WHO MUST BE BULLIED FOR THEIR OWN GOOD." ALTHOUGH QUESTIONABLE, THE CHILEAN SUPREME COURT DECISION WAS LEGITIMATE AND PROBABLY APPROPRIATE-- (WOULD THE US EXTRADITE A CIA DIRECTOR TO STAND TRIAL IN MOSCOW FOR SOME MURDER COMMITTED BY ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES?, ASKS THE HERALD.) BY TREATING THAT DECISION WITH CONTEMPT, THE US "MERELY GIVES EXTRA STRENGTH TO THE FORCES IT IS SEEKING TO DEBILITATE."

10. [REDACTED] XDS-4) THE EMBASSY RECEIVED A LATE REPORT FROM A SOMETIMES RELIABLE SOURCE, WHO QUOTED AN ARGENTINE PRISON OFFICIAL, THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF "DISAPPEARED" -- THE NUMBER GIVEN WAS A DIFFICULT-TO-CREDIT 3,000 -- HAD RECENTLY BEEN TRANSFERRED TO BUENOS AIRES AND ARE HELD IN EXTREMELY CROWDED CONDITIONS BY THE ARMY AT CAMPO DE MAYO AND BY THE NAVY AT THE "PUERTO NUEVO" AREA OF THE BUENOS AIRES WATERFRONT. THE PRISON SOURCE PROFESSED FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF THESE PRISONERS, SINCE THEIR EXPERIENCES CONSTITUTE AN INDICTMENT OF THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT. WE REGARD THIS INFORMATION AS A LEAD TO BE FOLLOWED UP BY OTHER MEANS, RATHER THAN AS A PIECE OF HARD INFORMATION. THE PRISON

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SOURCE ALSO STATED THAT AT VILLA DEVOTO 300 WOMEN HAD ALREADY BEEN CLEARED OF CHARGES BUT COULD NOT BE RE-LEASED BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION BY PRISON DIRECTOR RUIZ, BACKED BY HARDLINE ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY.

11. [REDACTED] AN IMPORTANT JEWISH CONTACT OF THE EMBASSY HAS INFORMED US THAT AMERICAN JEWISH AUTHOR AND LECTURER ELLIE WIESEL MAY BE PLANNING A TRIP TO ARGENTINA TO LOOK INTO THE GENERAL SITUATION HERE AND TO PLEAD THE CASE OF JACOBO TIMERMAN. WIESEL IS REPORTED [REDACTED]
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INTERESTED IN MAKING THE TRIP ON CONDITION HE BE ALLOWED TO SEE TIMERMAN AND THAT AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA BE ARRANGED.
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